

Committee on Ways and Means

H.R. 5865, the *Returned Americans Protection Act of 2006*

Short Summary

Summary

The *Returned Americans Protection Act*, H.R. 5865 will help thousands of Americans fleeing the chaos in Lebanon and returning to the United States by providing modest additional funding to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to assist them upon their return to the U.S. The bill:

- temporarily lifts the \$1 million annual spending cap on the current HHS repatriation program. CBO expects this will allow about \$4 million in additional spending to assist those being evacuated.

To ensure program integrity and increase program oversight, the legislation also:

- requires the HHS Inspector General to report to Congress on how program funds are spent for this purpose, and
- improves oversight by requiring Congressional action for the program to continue past Fiscal Year 2007.

H.R. 5865 is estimated by CBO to be cost neutral over the next five years, and will achieve modest savings over 10 years.

Assistance Provided to Evacuees to Date

As of 8:00 a.m., Sunday, July 23, 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that 20 flights had landed at four U.S. airports carrying 3,890 U.S. citizens evacuated from Lebanon. Additionally,

- 25 unaccompanied minors have been assisted with their onward travel.
- 21 special needs cases have been addressed, of which 12 were medical cases.
- 274 persons, or 7 percent, received assistance with tickets to a final destination in the U.S. at a cost of \$63,000 (average cost per ticket is \$230).
- 145 repayment agreements have been signed and 23 waivers granted.
- 62 persons received \$3,350 in cash advances (average of \$54 per person).
- 97 hotel vouchers were issued.